

Committee on Resources

Subcommittee on Water & Power

Testimony

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**TESTIMONY OF HENRY J. VAUX, JR., ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT,
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ON H.R. 3267.**

Mr. Chairman, my name is Henry J. Vaux, Jr. and I am Associate Vice President of the University of California System for agricultural and natural resource programs. I appear here this morning on behalf of California's federal Water Resources Research Institute, where I formerly served as Director. At the outset, I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee in support of efforts to reclaim and improve the Salton Sea. I also want to reiterate our profound thanks for your long-term support of the Water Resources Research Institute Program.

In my testimony this morning, I wish to make three basic points. First, I want to describe and clarify the purposes of the federal Water Resources Research Institutes and briefly identify several of the ways in which the Institute in California has addressed these purposes. Second, I want to elaborate upon the current mission and role of the Institute. Third, and finally, I want to describe the capability of interests of the California Water Resources Research Institute in supporting the activities that would be authorized under the provisions of HR 3267.

The federal Water Resources Research Institutes were first authorized by the Water Resources Research Act of 1964 (P.L.88-379). The Institute program has been reauthorized approximately every five years since. The most recent reauthorization is contained in P.L. 104-147. The program maintains federal Water Resources Research Institutes at the Land- Grant University in each of the 50 states, in the District of Columbia and in the several Trust Territories. The broad purpose of the Institutes is to focus the collective research expertise of scholars in the nation's institutions of higher education on water problems at the local, regional and national level. To this end, the authorizing legislation requires that the Institutes make their funds available to scholars at all institution of higher education in their respective states. Thus, one of the hallmarks of the Institute program is that competition for the federal funds that it administers are open to faculty in all institutions of higher education and NOT just to researchers at the Land-Grant Universities.

- **Faculty researchers with interests in water resources at ALL of California's Colleges and Universities are eligible to compete for the federal funds which the California Water Resources Research Institute awards.**

The California Water Resources Research Institute, which is also known as the University of California Water Resources Center, was initially established by the State at the University of California in 1958. With the passage of P.L. 88-379, the Center was also designated as the federal Water Resources Research Institute for California. The Institute's role is to facilitate, coordinate and support research on water resources undertaken by faculty at California's public and private Universities. Over the last ten years, nearly all of the federal dollars appropriated to the California Institute have been awarded to faculty researchers on campuses other than University of California campuses. Thus, for example, since 1987, these funds have been awarded to faculty researchers at San Diego State University, Humboldt State University, California State University at Fresno, the California Institute of Technology and Stanford University. The Institute is unique in that it maintains relationships with virtually all faculty with interests in water resources at all of California's Colleges and Universities. The most recent addition of our California Directory of Water Expertise lists some 986 faculty at 33 Colleges and Universities.

- **The role of the California Water Resources Research Institute is to identify the high priority research topics; to ensure, through peer review, that research is directed at the highest priority topics and is of the highest quality; and to engage in programs of research dissemination to inform other researchers, water managers and members of the public of the results of the research.**

The California Water Resources Research Institute does not conduct research. Rather, its role is to facilitate the conduct of research by faculty experts located at the state's colleges and universities. This facilitation is accomplished in a variety of ways. Annually, high priority research topics are identified in consultation with water managers, local, state and federal officials with responsibilities for water resources and members of the public. Research proposals are evaluated and rated by peer groups and only those of the highest quality receive research support. The results of water research accomplished in California and throughout the world are disseminated in a variety of publications, at annual conferences and at workshops convened for the purpose. By performing its facilitation role the Water Resources Research Institute helps to ensure that research on water resources in California is well coordinated, focuses on the most pressing topics and is of the highest quality. In addition, the Institute's activities help to avoid duplication of research effort both within California and nationally.

- **The California Water Resources Research Institute is prepared to facilitate the development and conduct of any research or programs of research that the "Salton Sea Research Management Committee" may identify as necessary pursuant to the provisions of HR 3276.**

I wish to emphasize as clearly as I can that our presence here today and our interest in the "Sonny Bono Memorial Salton Sea Reclamation Act" lies with ensuring that whatever research may emerge as a consequence of this act is accomplished by the most qualified investigators and is of the highest possible

quality. We believe that many important research questions will emerge as reclamation and restoration efforts go forward. We stand prepared to assist local, state and federal officials in identifying and framing those questions, should that be appropriate. We are also prepared to make available our good offices to ensure that only the highest quality research projects are funded and that all of our college and University researchers with an interest in questions related to the restoration of the Salton Sea are afforded an opportunity to compete for whatever funds may be available.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to reiterate that the California Water Resources Research Institute stands ready to help in any way as you move forward with H.R. 3267. Let me thank you again for the opportunity to appear before your sub-committee, and for your continuing support of the Water Resources Research Institute program.

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